

The Republican.

No. 22, VOL. 12.] LONDON, Friday, Dec. 2, 1825. [PRICE 6d.

JOINT STOCK BOOK COMPANY.

IT is proposed to form a company to be called the BOOK COMPANY.

The undersigned projector confesses that his object is to make the printing press as powerful in his hands as combined capital can make it.

To do this, much of the direction of this company will rest with him; but that direction will be subject to the counsel and correction of a committee of subscribers, and every affair of the company will be conducted in the most open, most honourable and most business-like manner, courting the scrutiny of every subscriber.

The class of books which this company will first offer to the public will be complete editions, in the English language, of the work of standard authors, who have written in any language, with a view to human improvement. And the general rule, though exceptions may arise, will be, to print old known standard works, that might not be in print, or that might not have been before printed in the English Language.

The books of this company are to be finished in the best literary, editorial and operative style, avoiding all unnecessary expense as to embellishments.

The shares are to be of one hundred pounds each, transferable, and to receive an interest of five per cent, to be paid annual and regularly independent of all dividends or augmentations of shares that may arise from further profits.

A subscription for a full share can alone entitle the subscriber to an eligibility to the committee; but the undersigned will receive, and be responsible for any sum of five pounds and upwards that is the aliquot part of one hundred, of which he will form shares and take them in his own name, and for which a proportionate interest and dividend shall be as regularly paid as for a full share.

Any full shareholder, who may prefer the concealment of his or her name may receive the same advantage by a reliance on the undersigned.

As some responsibility will attach to the printing and pub-

lishing, the undersigned will take it upon himself at the low charge of five per cent. which is but the half of that which is ordinarily charged for publishing. Thus the company will have no dealings but with the paper-merchant and the undersigned, and be exempt from every kind of liability.

Apartments will be successively taken proportioned to the extension of the company's property, and, as early as possible, it will possess its own printing materials, as the cheapest means of printing.

Until printing materials can be obtained, the undersigned will get the work of the company done in the most economical manner. And until a committee can be appointed to approve or improve, he will appoint such a person or persons as are necessary to the book-keeping and wholesale publishing department.

Subscriptions for shares will be taken throughout the first quarter by the undersigned, and the press will be set to work with the new year. Such shares as are taken before the first of January, 1826, can alone be entitled to receive the first quarter's interest and so on in succession before the first of April, July, and October.

Whatever may be the sums advanced before the first of January, the business of the company will proceed, as we could not use a large capital at once, if it were possessed.

RICHARD CARLILE.

OBSERVATIONS.

The above is the outline of an important plan, which I have long purposed to make. I disclaim all idea of profit from it, beyond that of a shareholder and a bookseller. We have no Lord Nugents, no Duke of Buckingham to patronize, for pay, our joint stock company; but we have the best object in view for which an association can take place. It was well observed, by the author of Christianity Unveiled; *that truth will force its way to thrones*. I begin to think, that it has happened in this country, and it now remains, a last important point, to make truth rebound from the throne to every inhabitant of the Island. We must assist the throne in the propagation of truth, and such a throne shall have my support.

As far as I can exercise influence in this company, I will pledge myself, that it shall be conducted to the profit and great profit of the shareholders. Quarterly reports of progress, of books printed, printing, and sold shall be made, while I am at liberty to do it, and my ambition will be, however large or however small that printing and sale may be, that it shall appear before the public in a manner that shall become no bad lesson for other companies, and for

the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in reference to his public revenue and expenditure.

I have not issued this prospectus without a preparation to begin having been already made: to act rather than to speculate, being my manner of motion. I am already promised various sums, the amount of one of which is of itself five hundred pounds. On the first of January 1826, the JOINT STOCK BOOK COMPANY will date its origin, and, if possible, the first work that is to issue from it, shall be published on that day.

It is distinctly to be understood, that I shall hold myself responsible for all monies intrusted to my care, and for the whole concern, until a proper committee and direction shall take it out of my hands. Under this view, I can only offer to the shareholders my past conduct as a security for the future. As far as any person, may wish their names concealed under mine, their wishes shall be honourably complied with.

Congdon's Hotel, Exeter,
Nov. 25, 1825.

RICHARD CARLILE.

TO THE REPUBLICANS OF THE ISLAND OF
ALBION,

*And to all those in the British Isles, who may desire to possess
Republican Benefits and Republican Virtues.*

CITIZENS, Congdon's Hotel, Exeter, Nov. 25, 1825.
IT is due to you, from me, that, after six years of close imprisonment, on beginning to move over a greater space of the surface of the earth than the walls of Dorchester Gaol afforded, I narrate my sensations. I have told you that, my leaving the Gaol was felt as a mere change of lodgings; though, I confess, with respect to my hosts, from the disagreeable to the agreeable. The last act of my host the Gaoler was, to tell me, that *the sooner I left the better*, and from the time that he was in possession of my warrants of discharge, to my quitting the Gaol, he scarcely lost sight of me. So sudden was my removal, that my only escort to the town was my two youngest boys, and the Gaoler was not polite enough to say:—"pray stay until the rain is over, or take an umbrella." However, I was glad to turn my back to that most disagreeable fellow for the last time, and though I have eyed him passing in the streets of Dorchester, I have not the least wish to see him again, unless I can move him by the power of a legal warrant into a court of justice.

In Dorchester, my reception was decidedly good and

many persons expressed their good wishes who had been systematic in their abuse of me while I remained in the Gaol. One affair I must record. I left the Gaol on the Friday afternoon. Saturday was Dorchester market. Galpin, "the brewer of bad ale," was somewhere in company where one proposed as a toast—"Confusion to Carlile and all his followers." The toast went on a little way; but when it came to Galpin, he would not utter it! I desired the gentleman who gave me this information to propose a meeting and a treaty of honourable peace, either that Galpin should come to the King's Arms Inn to take a glass of wine, or that I should come to the Phoenix to drink a glass of his "bad ale."

Up to this moment, I have not received the least insult, and I flatter myself, that there is a growing spirit of what is called religious toleration in this country, superior to any thing to be found in any other country. On waiting for the Devonshire Coach at the King's Arms Inn, Dorchester, old Mr. Pitt, the member for the county and the visiting magistrate for the Gaol, moved and stood about me, as if he would have spoken or have been spoken to. I asked myself if any thing had passed for which I could thank him; but I felt nothing; and, as I certainly will prosecute the authorities of the Gaol as a body, for various matters of ill treatment, if I can, I thought it prudent not to notice him. I shall do this rather for the benefit of future prisoners than for any gratification or satisfaction to myself. Old Mr. Pitt is a plain, unassuming, and, in general, a good natured man; but he never met me in that character, and he never was qualified to fill any public office.

Of one of the magistrates, Jemmy Frampton, I have heard an excellent anecdote. I have introduced this man to my readers, as the very essence of an insolent, haughty, to which I may add, an ignorant country justice. He has shewn himself to me not above twice or thrice, for I have made it a point, when before them, to caricature the stiffness of these men. In the time of Gilbert Wakefield's being a prisoner, this man took a lead among the visiting magistrates; but having taken a dislike to the Gaoler, he has not interfered much in that capacity of late. Wakefield was in the habit of writing on the politics of the day, and, on a certain occasion. Frampton intruded upon him in a most pompous manner, saying:—"I am come, Mr. Wakefield, to remonstrate with you *magisterially* on the style and tenour of your writings, on which Gilbert Wakefield, to cari-

cature his pomosity, replied, " And I in return, Mr. Frampton, request you to walk *magisterially* out of the room."

I have never said any thing of the Dorchester Gaoler's wife, never liking to say any thing against a woman, though I have heard of many insolent observations from her. But to shew how well she matches the Gaoler, I will mention her conduct as described to me since I left the Gaol, with respect to the accouchement of Mrs. Carlile. One would have supposed, that the wife of the Gaoler would have visited any prisoner at such a moment; but though Mrs. Andrews prays and is very religious, she is much too ignorant, too haughty and too self conceited, though a poor inane thing, to observe the rules of ordinary humanity. I never heard of her doing an act of kindness to either male or female prisoner, while the mother of the present Gaoler would do good by stealth. When Mrs. Carlile was in labour, the matron, always attentive, was observant of that attention which was suitable to the occasion; and though, in any matter connected with myself, I have found no reason to respect the Surgeon, I confess, that he did his duty in the best manner on that occasion. But as to Mrs. Andrews, the only circumstance that I have heard of her as connected with the affair is, that, in noticing the hasty movements of the matron, she sneeringly observed:—" Ann seems quite in a fright; because Carlile's wife is in labour!" The matron though a servant, expressed her disgust at the conduct of her mistress, and this one anecdote may be received as a sample of the general conduct of the Gaoler's wife. For my part, for the last three years, or from the period here spoken of, I have never thought Gaoler or wife worth a passing notice.

The reader must now suppose me on the top of the coach getting well blown upon by a high wind on the Dorset Downs, almost the whole country between Dorchester and Bridport being uncultivated. The weather being fine, I preferred the outside to the inside seat: but was sent in by a shower before we got to Bridport. Here I found two ladies, both travellers and both intelligent, the one young and the other old. It appeared, that they had not heard my name at the stopping of the coach, and the old lady, though she subsequently protested that she was not a politician, and that as to Republicanism she had not an idea of it, made a fair trial upon my seditious qualities, by endeavouring to call them forth, in reprobating the conduct of

the king and his ministers, in not giving the uncultivated land to those who left the country to seek such land elsewhere. I assured the lady, that the king was better disposed than his ministers or the aristocracy were disposed to encourage him to be, and that the Church more than he kept the land uncultivated and expatriated its children to seek a cheaper land, a land free from tithes and other enormous taxes. This was assented to; because nothing was said about religion. But the old lady, determined that I should not defend the character of the king, brought up the case of the late queen and made me so seditious as to confess that it was bad. This was our subject, until we reached Bridport. Here we dined at Tucker's, from Rabbit and Goose, a decidedly bad dinner. It was observed, by one at the table, that geese in some cases, lived a century; and we supposed the one on the table to have been ninety-nine years old at its death. As a finish, we had some pastry in a state of dissolution, mildewing or putrifying. I never saw such a thing put to a table; and for these comforts we were charged the moderate price of three and sixpence each. So, Mr. Tucker mind what you send to table, when I again pass through Bridport.

I had a friend with me, at this my first motion on the face of the earth, after my new birth, my regeneration, my salvation, my being born again with fire and water and inspired with the spirit of the Logos, as we first rate Christians can say, as well as they of the inferior classes, and I informed him, that I had met with a lady more republican than myself, to whom, on the next stage, I intended to make myself known. On re-entering the coach, the most agreeable and most liberal political conversation arose. I was all perfection in my views, and by the apparent excitement and attention of both ladies, I supposed myself a most charming companion to them; but lo! the fatal moment came, my ambition induced me to announce my name, really thinking I had found a female supporter; but alas! I found my mistake, one face went up to one window of the coach and the other to the other, and it appeared a matter of question as to the propriety of going further with me. All that I could do in complimenting the elder on her correct political views availed me nothing. She protested that she was not a politician, did not know that she had talked politics, thought it very wrong for ladies to meddle with any thing of the kind, and as to attacks upon religion, she abhorred them! A long silence occurred, though I endeavoured to

look most humble and explanatory. At length, the elder lady began a sort of indirect lecture upon the impropriety of shocking religious impressions. I appealed to her opinion of me before I had announced my name and it required all the art I was master of to redeem an atom of good grace before we reached Exeter. Every attempt to defend or explain what I had done sent the lady's face up to the window; but by the next morning, on her leaving the inn, she sent her compliments to me by my friend.

I am surprised at my reception in Exeter. I had not intended to stop or to sit down in any house, but just to shew myself to my old acquaintances, that they might see that I was not metamorphosed into that old dragon about which they have heard so much. I find, that I can scarcely get away. This town is rapidly improving in knowledge. The first day of my stay, here was a meeting at the Guildhall, for the establishment of a Mechanics Institute, and I heard a Mr. Tyrrell say some things quite to the purpose, just what I should have liked to have said myself on a similar occasion. He said, and said most truly, that the only object of such institutions was to increase the amount of knowledge and to raise the labouring man to a sense of his importance in society. A man who can oppose these institutions cannot be both honest and wise: and thus it is, that we see EXETER'S PUBLIC FOOL, AND EXETER'S DISGRACE, JOHN COOKE, trying to form an intelligible sentence against them.

This is the whole of my journal to the morning of the 25th, and now I am writing while I want sleep. I shall miss for a time the solitude of the Gaol with regard to filling 'The Republican'; but I begin to experience that I shall add to my improvement by a contact with all characters.

I mark with emotion, the hideous, unsocial, uncheerful, unhappy, ugly face which religion generates, and I see anew the importance of what I have done and of what I intend to do for the improvement of the female face as well as the female mind. It is knowledge alone that can give real beauty to the face: a mere fair outline, without knowledge to give it expression, is but a cold and lifeless statue and can charm none but weak minds. Nor can dress make up for the defects which an ignorant or a religious face exhibits. It heightens them and forms but a double deception. It deceives the wearer and he who is attracted by it and decoys both into a snare that ine-

vitably generates an unhappy life, for which no external appearance can atone. Ladies, to be truly happy and truly beautiful, you must seek wisdom and love truth.

RICHARD CARLILE.

TO MR. R. CARLILE DORCHESTER GAOL.

SIR,
If the following subject meets your approbation, it is at your service.

Being at Margate, in the month of September for the benefit of the salt water, I went, one Sunday, to Hughes's music room, to look at the newspapers. I found no one there but a Jewess, whose object was the same as mine. After I entered, she, for some time, was reading intently some subject that seemed to engage her attention. But as it is natural for people, before they speak, to view their company with the eye of criticism, to see what sort of subjects they have fallen in with, and how to adapt a suitable discourse to draw the attention, we were thus situated for some minutes, before we entered into conversation. At last, the Jewess, after rolling her fine black eyes upon me several times, then turning them from the paper which she had in her hands upon the ocean, brake silence, by exclaiming,—"Bless me! I think suicides become more common every day! here is an account of another person laying violent hands upon himself! What can induce people to act so mad a part, to take away that life and to destroy that body that was out of their power to create, and apparently to put an end to that existence which commenced but a few years back, in the memory of thousands of their contemporaries; what can so push them on to delirium and madness?" I answered, that the mind, like the body, is only capable of sustaining a certain pressure, all beyond that must press it to the earth.

As I found my companion the Jewess a sensible woman and capable of entering into historical and metaphysical arguments, I started a few questions respecting the modes of faith professed by the different nations on the earth, but more particularly the religion of the Jewish people.

She seemed partial to discussions of that nature, my observations were well received by her, and she immediately entered into my views.

I asked her what she thought of the Christian religion, and what was her opinion of the founder of the doctrine?—You must know, said she, that he whom you suppose to have been the founder of your religion had nothing to do in the affair. He was one of our people and professed himself to be such. Your priests,

who live by telling you, that Jesus Christ was the son of God, that he came down from heaven commissioned by the Almighty to preach this doctrine to the race of man, that he converted a few ignorant fishermen to his doctrine, to assist him in propagating the faith, such poor ignorant stupid fellows as we see lounging about Margate Pier, know, that this tale, trumped up by designing men, as the beginning of your Christian faith is false. But, said she, I will ask you, whether, this tale carries any probability of truth with it? If a person were to come into Margate to-day, and tell the people that he was the son of God, that he came down from heaven by a summons from the Almighty, all the probability of any conversions to his assertions would be among the most illiterate people of the town. The well-informed and sensible would turn away with disgust at the tale. Is it any more likely, that a thing of that kind should take place in Judea, than in England? Have you not heard of something similar to it in the person of Johannah Southcote, who was to have bred the Shiloh? And pray how did that turn out, when put to the test by sensible men and physicians? In the same way that the tale of the Virgin Mary and her son Jesus would have ended, had it been put to the same scrutiny.

To be explicit upon the subject, I will inform you how your religion originated. The Romans, being jealous of the Jewish people, on account of the superior attachment which they manifested towards the doctrine of Moses, and finding, that, at Rome, they had nothing to offer to the people of their nation so valuable as what is contained in the Pentateuch, set to work, sometime between the second and third century of your era, to form those books called the gospel. I assure you, said she, that those books which go by the names you see attached to them, were never written by those people; but by artful men of Rome, who made it a state trick. Their only object was money, or to make a lucrative job of it. Weigh these things over, that I advance to you, and you will find what I say to be true. If any such thing had taken place in Judea, as is told the people now-a-days, would not our people, the Jews, have been apprized of it? Instead of that, the story is fabricated by foreigners, and we are persecuted for not believing it!! Our people were upon the spot, and they say positively that nothing of the kind occurred there.

I asked the lady, what was her opinion of a future state, telling her, that the Jewish Bible was very silent upon that head. She replied, that the Pentateuch said very little upon a future life, but the generality of the Jews thought that there were hopes of a future existence, but she had her doubts upon the subject. Solomon expressly declared, that there was no difference between a man and a beast, for they all go to one place, and at the close of the sentence, he says, (admitting that there was an opinion then prevalent regarding a future state of existence) who knoweth that

the spirit of a man goeth upward? It is, you see, plainly stated by Solomon as an interrogation, and he leaves you to draw your own conclusion. However, said she, the importance of the subject may be anxiously looked for; still we are bewildered and can arrive at no certainty. It is one of those dark, intricate things that must be left to futurity to unravel.

The Jewish lady lamented greatly, that mankind should be split into sects and parties, and that religion in general, instead of answering the end, which each sect pretended to profess, or that of peace and good will, should substitute contention and animosities between its different professors.

I was very much edified by this Jewess's discourse; for I found her candid, liberal, and sensible. And I learnt, by this interview, that our prejudices arise in a great measure from a want of candour on our parts, and a rational attention to what some, whom we suppose to be our opponents, have to advance in support of their sentiments. As it is the duty of every honest individual to expose knavish priestcraft, wherever it discovers itself, it is likewise his duty to make public liberal speeches and rational disquisitions. Some of the best observations that are verbally delivered in society, are allowed to die for want of making them public through the means of some of the publications of the day. Every thing that tends to unfetter the mind, to enlarge the understanding, to give scope to liberty and loosen the chains of priestcraft, should find its way to the understandings of men, and more particularly to those of the rising generation.

I am Sir, yours truly,
J. LEE.

A SECOND CALL TO UNBELIEVERS.

FRIENDS OF MANKIND,

THE humble being, who thus addresses you, is well aware, that the virtuous and just require no exterior incitement to do good, nor any stimulus to perform their duty. It is truly distressing to the benevolent and humane, who wish well to the whole human race, and who are endeavouring to break the yoke of despotic superstition, to observe with what zeal and indefatigable industry, the ignorant, the base and sordid Christians are extending the chain of fraud and binding the human mind in hopeless slavery. Every exertion is made by the rich, the powerful, the ambitious, the interested, the foolish, the vain, the hypocritical, the deceiver and the deceived, to keep up the farce of religion. No matter what the creed, Christians of all denominations, Turks, Jews, fire-worshippers, the devout slaves of all sects, even the Deist is esteemed or nearly tolerated; every thing that bears the name of religion meets with encouragement. Nothing, now, is religi-

ously absurd, but truth! Amidst this war of fraud, injustice and fable against reason, right and verity, shall we stand neuter? Awed by an idea of prudent cowardice, shall our tongues and pens rest in shameless inactivity, while knavery and folly stride triumphant "from Indus to the Pole?"

To whom shall we look, for relief from these plagues? Where find shelter from the Biblemania; and how prevent or correct its pernicious influence? We must still suffer; but let us endeavour to shield our offspring from its tremendous yoke. Let us imprint into their early mind, that we can be generous without the love of heaven; that we can be just without the fear of hell; that experience teaches us, that religion has no good effect on the human mind; but, on the contrary, hardens it against love, friendship, kindness, and liberality. The worst of men in all countries, where any kind of religion is established, are apparently the most devout, pious, and scrupulous, in points of faith and religious duties: and, indeed, we find, among other classes, the most sentimental and fastidious, both men and women, are the more licentious and the greater libertines. And what is the reason? The truth is, they are taught nothing which they can respect. Or, properly speaking, they are taught no good. Words that mean nothing, ceremonies founded on fraud and ignorance, exercised in vapid ostentation, pride, arrogance, spirituality, wholly incomprehensible; dogmatic precepts, cowardly belief in creeds without reason, and a supine resignation to the will of the priest, comprise the character of a Christian.

The divinity of Jesus Christ has long been doubted and disputed by contending sectarians. His divinity is now out of the question; we have no doubts about it; honest criticism and fearless investigation, judicious comparison and candid truth, have completely shewn the story of his existence to have been a fable. And we boldly assert, that such a man never was, never had a being; that the whole story is a fabrication, and we call, with triumphant superiority and conscious victory, on his tens of thousands of well paid priests, to produce a single proof of his ever having existed. We reject the New Testament as an uncorroborated narrative.

The pernicious doctrine of salvation by faith without works, or to believe that God will save men's souls, because they say they believe a lie to be the truth, without doing any good, has done more mischief to society, than all the deadly sins combined. To think or to believe, that a man, in the commission of every vice which he can commit, to the degrading of himself and the injury of others, for sixty or seventy years, shall, by a death-bed repentance of two or three weeks, or as many days, or hours, even minutes make his peace with God, as they call it, and, only by calling on the Lord Jesus, have his sins forgiven him and be instantly made a fit companion for the virtuous and the good, is not

only absurd and preposterous ; but derogatory of the justice and goodness of a God, if there were one. And thus praying is a vice ; for it intimates a forgiveness of sins without any other qualification than apparent repentance.

Let us ask, is there a man possessed of sense and reason, who has diligently read the books called the holy scriptures, an epithet ridiculous enough to say nothing worse, who can for a moment imagine, that an immutable God can change what he has decreed and which must necessarily happen ? The truth is, that the reading of those scriptures destroy thought in the embryo, as they forbid investigation, announce terrible punishments against every doubt, threaten the wrath of God on those who differ even in thought from the precept given, or who disbelieve the tale told by them, however repugnant to sense and reason the one, or absurd, idle and childish the other. What then, men are taught to believe ; but the privilege of thinking is conferred on very few. Hence the Christian world now consists of two classes—Knaves who deceive, and fools who are deceived. To destroy this connection, to shame the knaves and reduce them to honesty and reason, to enlighten the ignorant and give wisdom to fools, must be the ardent task of the Materialist. Truth, honour and justice inspire the undertaking. And why not the laudable ambition to do good. The interesting duty of decrying vice, the noble courage to promote human happiness, the heroic resolution of assisting the fallen and freeing the enslaved ; are these not honourable and powerful motives to stimulate us to action ? We see, daily and hourly before our faces men, whom we know to be base hypocrites, mean and ignorant, leading what are called respectable lives and living in comfort and plenty, if not in affluence, by preaching stale lies and absurd conjectures and nonsense, about heaven, hell, and the world to come, as if they had been there. A deluded populace invariably aids the impostors, by swallowing whatever ribaldry is uttered among them. They make their disciples miserable by the repetition of inconceivable terrors, and the more they frighten and afflict their audience, the better they are paid. They speak not of any thing which can be understood. They are not possessed of logic, science or historical information, and are in general but slightly gifted with the article *sense*. Yet, by dint of importunate clamour and persevering impudence, they, at once, cheat their auditors of their reason and their pence, fill them with superstitious horrors, and abandon them to misery in this world and despair as to the next.

I am but a weak advocate ; yet, I can safely say, that I have relieved many from these vain terrors of the imagination. Many, when I first knew them, were stupid bigots and miserable from a confusion of religious ideas, who were tortured with an incomprehensible category of intrusive nothings, now own themselves cured, feel comfortable and thank me for the happy change in

their mental condition. When asked, what religion are you, I answer *none*.—What, do not you believe in any thing?—That is no question.—Do you believe in God?—No.—Then you are an Atheist?—Yes or no, as you like.—Yes or no! What does that mean?—Having no proof of what you call God, I cannot avert myself from it. You must prove an existence before you can prove me an Atheist. Why every thing says there is a God. Look at the sun, the moon and the stars, how came they? Who made them?—I know not; and not knowing, conclude that they exist as independent properties, subject only to partial changes.—Oh! hear me a moment on this subject and answer me a question or two?—Certainly.—You say, if nothing had been to make the sun, moon, stars and this world, they had remained unmade? Then every thing must have had a beginning? Certainly. How came God? who you say had no beginning? Who made him? That is impious: I can speak to you no longer.—Hear me for a minute or two more. I confess, that if nothing else tended to make me an Atheist, the very science of Astronomy would. When I stand on the surface of this earth and view the vast illimitable field of space continued above, beneath and around, system on system scattered in countless millions, all as they are regulated and upheld by their own energies, or by those of each other. I ask, who or what self-existent, itself nothing, could make all these out of nothing? How can intelligence act upon such bodies? No idea of such a being can enter the imagination.—Then who or what did make every thing?—I do not know.—As I said before, I believe they never were made; but that they are eternal and will endure eternally. Utterly destroyed they cannot be, for, to destroy the smallest particle of matter, is impossible. How came men into existence? By some energy or mixture of matter unknown and inconceivable to us; as is the case with every vegetable and animal production in life.—Do you think the account given by Moses of the creation not true?—I do not think it Moses' account, he, if such a man wrote had it from some person who lived before him and palmed it on the Jews, who were the most brutal and ignorant people in the world. Beside, the geographical and astronomical ideas of the Bible are enough to destroy its veracity. The ends of the earth, the sun standing still, flying from one place to another to shun the Almighty, makes it nonsense to a man of science and annihilates the Mosaic cosmogony at a blow.—So, you do not believe that you have an immortal soul to be saved? No, nor to be damned.—You think you are like the cows and horses? I do not, I think man the noblest production of matter. He is calculated for superior intellectual and social attainments; his powers are little short of making worlds, had he space, footing and materials.—Then why do you doubt of his having a soul?—I have no doubt about it, my mind is made up on the subject and my reasons are, that having

sense to know whatever is for my benefit, I have no knowledge of a second self-existing being within me. We have no more proof of it than of deity. And before I believe in a God, I must see him, *and at work* too, making a world or two out of nothing. As for the being of a soul, I know on what your idea rests and know also that it is nothing more than the action of the body. Where is it in syncope, or in other suspended animation? These opinions and principles, so far from being afraid or ashamed to own, I modestly confess, when occasion requires; I am proud of their superiority over all that I meet, and they contribute in no small degree to the happiness of

SHEBAGO.

A SYNOPSIS OF THE JEW BOOKS AND OF CHRISTIANITY.

I WILL if I can, for the benefit of the tribes on the banks of the Winconsin, make a synopsis of the religion of these countries. It is difficult to separate their religion from their politics; for the just and upright judges of the land, most impudently and falsely, insist, that the religion which they call Christian, and which is a most absurd and incomprehensible mode of belief and worship, is part, or, as their great lawyers say, is part and parcel of the law of the land, and hence the law is eternally at variance with man, and continually punishing him for what they please to call erroneous modes of thinking. Whenever law becomes connected with religion, it is for the purpose of fraud. Religion and law are two distinct principles, and, therefore, ought to be carefully kept apart. Religion, as it would be understood, relates to God and man in spirit only. Law is a pact between man and man, is purely temporal, having nothing to do with divinity. This, I premise, that our idea may be clearly conceived on the subject. No man, therefore, can, by any justifiable means interfere with another's religious concerns, except in the way of rational discussion. Let every one worship his own idol, if he must have one, and much good may his absurd piety and stupid devotions do him. If he will but keep the priest out of the case, he will find his deity harmless.

To comprehend what can be understood of the religion of this country it is necessary to introduce a fair outline. Then we can think or speak of it with propriety.

Six thousand years ago, nearly it is said, that a great spirit of whom we have no knowledge, created this world out of nothing, and, in a certain part of it, planted a fine garden, made one man and one woman in his own likeness, hence we learn that the great spirit is like a man, and he put them to live in this garden. But in the middle of it, he planted a fine fruit-tree, and told them, if

they ate any of the fruit which grew on it, he would kill them; because it would make them wise. We know not how long they lived in the garden without touching the fruit. But, at length by the advice of another great spirit, whom these people call Satan, the Serpent, or the Devil, the woman, who longed for the fruit or for wisdom, plucked an apple or two and persuaded the good man her husband to eat, highly commanding what the civil gentleman, the Devil, had advised her to do. We may imagine, that the great spirit had made them blind; for, on eating the fruit, it is said, their eyes were opened. However that be, the great spirit was in a terrible pet, exceedingly angry about it, and turned them both out of his garden, like two vagrants sent to the treadmill, thence to work like common people and live from day to day on their daily labour. When their eyes were opened they began to enjoy each other, and the woman to conceive and bear children. The great spirit, seeing this, made them fig-leaved aprons, to cover the parts of generation, of which neither the great spirit of the Indians nor the Indians themselves are ashamed. And why should they be ashamed of that which is good? The two first children quarrelled and one named Cain, the eldest, killed his brother Abel, who seems to have been the first methodist preacher. The strife was about religious opinions, and the first blood shed was, we are here told, for religious tenets about this great spirit.

After the murder of his brother, Cain went into voluntary exile into a distant country, which they call, or called, the land of Nod* and there took to him a wife and built a city; but how the woman came there we are not told. The women of this country were all very handsome, so much so, that the angels fell in love with them and came and dwelt with them. They say that the great spirit set a mark on Cain; but they do not tell us what that mark was. I suppose that it must have been this divine personal beauty, which was sufficient to captivate the very angels of heaven. Then the Book says, that the great spirit grew very angry at his celestial people falling in love with the fair daughters of the Earth, or of Cain, and, out of spite, in the height of his passion, gathered two or three dozen oceans together, threw them slap dash on this world, and drowned every thing in it, fish and all, except an old man named Noah, his wife and family, in all only eight persons, with an assortment of the live stock then in the world. These he saved in a great ship, which he taught Noah to build. This happened, they say, about four thousand years ago, and, we should know nothing about it now, only the great spirit made a man whom they call Moses, write a history of it, about three thousand years since. This same Moses seems to be a very doubt-

* The old adage of the land of Nod, where they feared no Devil and owned no God, seems to imply, that there was a nation of Atheists in the world six thousand years ago.

ful character, and whether he was a Jew, or only the bastard son of the king of Egypt's daughter, or whether he was some body else, or whether such a man existed, is a problem, which is becoming every day more difficult of solution. Nevertheless, they say, that the great spirit was sorry for having destroyed the world by water, and promised the men he never would drown them again. But that at the next time he got himself into a passion with them and the world, he would burn them and it to ashes and not leave a particle of it floating in existence.

They say, that the world went on as usual for a couple of thousand years, getting very bad, and the men so vexed and exasperated the great spirit, that he was determined to send them all to a new world, made somewhere underneath, called Hell, where, mens souls would remain burning to all eternity in fiery brimstone. This Hell, the Christian's say, is a large wide place with no bottom to it, and is filled or furnished with floating mountains, lakes and rivers, continents, oceans, rocks, shoals, and islands of solid burning rock brimstone, through which the souls of men must sail for ever in everlasting torment! And the only way to avoid this terrible destiny, for, there is, through the capricious mercy of the great spirit, a way to avoid it, is to believe, that a man, begotten by himself, on a woman, who was another man's wife, was God.

They tell a very curious story about this man-god of theirs. They say, that the great spirit was sorry to damn every body: because the man and the woman eat an apple five or six thousand years ago: but was most woefully put about, how to save people from his own wrath. By the way, though this great spirit, whom they call Jehovah, was always a devilish touchy fellow, no such thing as pleasing him long, the two modes of quieting his anger are something singular. In ancient times he was highly delighted with blood and carnage of beasts and men, and extremely gratified with smelling the stinking smoke of burning animals. In modern times, these men deprecate his boiling wrath, by praying to him on their knees, the poor performing that duty on the cold stones and in the dirt, the rich kneeling on velvet cushions stuffed with feathers, down, &c. this by the way.

We find, by the story, which they tell, that his wrath, at times, was very violent, and required nothing less than the destruction of the world to appease it, or else a worship of the man-god to get him to pray for them, and then he would only spare it for about two thousand years. Being put to his last shift through the wickedness of men, which he might have altered at any time he thought proper, being, as they all say, omnipotent, the great spirit, or Jehovah, had a son somehow, as old and as great as himself: this son, although as old and as great as himself, he begot again on the other man's wife, without carnal knowledge, by proxy, and in a truly ghostly and miraculous manner, without

injury to her immaculate virginity; though the virginity of a married woman has an odd sound, which, in eastern countries, is in itself wonderful, if not miraculous. Nevertheless, the married virgin was got with child, and seemed, by some of their accounts, to know nothing about it, until an angel came and informed her of it. The maid was delivered of a fine man-God-child the virginity still unimpaired! nay, do not laugh brethren!

As it became the only son of the great spirit, who was to be the sole redeemer of man, the prince of peace and King of Glory, and maker of heaven and earth, he was born in a stable, brought forth in the manger, where his mother—*Yes, the mother of God* was brought to bed of God himself, among cows and horses, mules and asses, pigs and poultry.

Now the scheme of this, they say, is the very best that could be devised, and, according to faith, runs thus:—

The great spirit was about to send all mankind to this hell, because the man and woman ate the apple or other fruit in his garden, six thousand years ago, which shews, what a revengeful, unforgiving spirit he is. But his son, as old and as great as himself, begged of his father, who was himself, to go down to the earth, be begotten and born again, become a man, serve an apprenticeship to a carpenter, labour for his bread, until he was qualified to be a methodist preacher, suffer death on the cross for attempting to make men better, suffer three days damnation in Hell as a taste, and then come up again into heaven, if he would forgive mankind for the crime of one man and woman eating his favourite apples.

After some consideration, the great spirit consented to this, begat his son again on the other man's wife, and the son of the great spirit was born of a virgin, in a stable, among cows, horses, pigs and poultry, &c. We do not know why the great spirit chose such a place for the accouchement of his daughter, wife, mother! If he cared nothing about himself, as all places are alike to him, he ought to have had some concern for the feelings of the poor woman; and not have frightened the cattle and poultry. The cuckold, his reputed* father, provided for the divine brat, and learned him his trade, which was that of a carpenter, although he gave him no other education, and we only hear of him once from his birth to his being thirty years of age. As was preordained, he grew tired of his trade and commenced methodist preacher, like Whitfield, Wesley, and the rest of the itinerant vagabonds, who like to hear themselves talk nonsense rather than to see and to feel themselves working at a trade. His doctrine, or that imputed to him, is remarkable for its meanness, prevarication, and inconsistency. He wishes to persuade people that he

* It is, however, a disputed point among the sects, who was the reputed father of this divine birth, the great spirit or Joseph the carpenter. The case is doubtful. If the priests clear up the point, I will send you their solution.

was the son of God, by perpetually calling himself the son of man. He told them to give their breeches and waistcoats, to a man who had taken away their coats, and, if any body gave them a slap on one cheek, to imprudently hold him up the other. That he did not come to bring them peace and unity, but hatred, and discord, sword, fire, and slaughter. This is most certainly the reason why his meek followers are always killing one another.

He went on preaching all manner of nonsense, telling a great number of foolish, unmeaning stories, about wailing, grinning, and gnashing of teeth in hell, and about floating in lakes of burning brimstone, body deathless, and fire quenchless. He performed, they say, all kinds of miracles.* He feasted five thousand people on a couple of red herrings, or two dried sprats, and a couple of penny rolls. This miracle being a good one, he was desired to repeat. He turned ten thousand devils out of one man, and sent them into a herd of swine, which was a comical miracle enough, as the bedevilled pigs ran into the sea and drowned themselves. This miracle is quite of a piece with Sampson and the three hundred foxes:—And, indeed, some unbelievers, hint a doubt of it, as, they say, that the Jews and Gentiles of Judea and the country adjacent never ate pork, that, consequently pigs were very scarce in the country. I think it a mock miracle, inserted in the *divine book* by some pagan wag, to display the ignorance of the Monks and the stupid credulity of the Christian believers.

He turned water into wine! This was his first and grand miracle, and, doubtless, produced a host of proselytes. The worst of it is, it was done at a feast, when all the people were already drunk. But I am commenting when I should only give the text. He restored to blind people their sight, and gave sight to some who were born blind. He made lame people walk, just the same as the divine Prince Hohenlohe has been lately doing in Ireland. He walked on the water, and raised the dead from the grave. He made the men catch fish on this side of the boat, when there were none on the other; and then leave off fishing and turn field-preachers, like the methodists. Last of all, to fulfil his mission, he got himself crucified, killed, buried, damned to hell, and, in three days, rose again, went about on earth, shewed himself to many, took his flight and went up into heaven without a balloon, assisted only by his own spiritual gas and material skin.

Notwithstanding his omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence nothing thrives that he takes in hand. Witness the Jews, and the Christian doctrine. We may naturally conclude, that there would be a great stir somewhere, when God was put to death.† And so there was, as they write, or rather, as Mr.

* All religions are founded on miracles, and all proselytes have been made by miracles. Every thing relating to religion is miraculous. Religion itself is a standing miracle. S.

† What an idea! to put the almighty God to death! Fellow me that among the Indians or Pagans of Greece or Rome!

Matthew, the turnpikeman or taxgatherer, writes; when the son of the great spirit was crucified, the light of the sun was put out for three hours, so that there was a total darkness over the whole earth; that there were terrible earthquakes in many places; that the dead arose from their graves, and walked about among the living; that the veil of the temple was rent in twain; with other phenomena, equally tremendous, awful and singular. One thing I must observe, that no other person, on the earth at that time, mentions a word about this appalling general catastrophe.

Although Rome, at that time, had a great number of fine and curious writers, poets, historians, and natural philosophers, men who recorded all the great and little wonderful phenomena of nature, men of profound research, historians of great candour and judgment, and many of them too, who were strongly tinctured with that vice of all ages, superstition; yet, they are all silent on the subject, and their silence stamps *impudent lie* on the face of the tale. This must make any one, except an ignorant Christian bigot, not only doubt, but throw up his creed in despair. We have nothing to do with it, I send you a synopsis of this curious story on which the code of Christian faith is founded; and this that I have written, and that I intend to write, for the amusement and instruction of yourself and the tribe on the banks of the Winconsin, is a true transcript of the book called the Bible and Testament. I vouch for it, before 120,000 priests, who are paid unknown millions of pounds sterling per annum, to preach and defend these vile publications and to prove the story a truth. A hard task, you will say, they have! I vouch for the correctness of my statement. Between you and I, it is not the truth or falsehood they care about; but the millions sterling per annum, which they gain, by saying, they believe it, and for endeavouring to make all others say the same and pay for it. If the community were to take away the salary from the priests, the priests would all, in one years time, say, the whole story was the most absurd, and fraudulent fable ever invented by man, or believed by the gaping multitude.

The death of the Great Spirit's son, Jesus, does not end the mysterious, farcical, drama: others take up the sticks, like true cudgel players. When Jesus compelled himself to lay them down; when he caused himself to be crucified, for the redemption of mankind; when he died, was buried, and in three days rose again from the dead, remaining some say forty days on earth, eating and drinking as usual, *en famille*, with his old acquaintance, who were in general the canaille of the suburbs of Jerusalem, loose women and idle ignorant men, such as the followers of Richard Brothers, Johanna Southcote, and all the new moon-light people, the infatuated of the day, who have no opinion of their own, and only adopt that of other people, for the sake of fashion, or to have something new to think or speak of; to these good people, the good man, Jesus, when he caused himself to leave the earth and ascend

into heaven; bequeathed himself and the great spirit, his father, under another form, or forms, and a new title, called, the Holy Ghost. This new god, or great spirit, made his appearance directly after Jesus went away, and showed himself under rather a questionable shape or shapes, viz. Neats tongues all split in two, up to the root, and, at times too, they had the appearance of being on fire! what good that might do, I know not; for it does not much augment the miracle; but they were split as we split a magpie's to make him speak. All, on whom these tongues fell, spoke directly, with other tongues, and were filled, as they say with the Holy Ghost. This, to me, I confess, is obscure. I cannot comprehend, how they spake with other tongues. If it is meant, that they spake other languages, with their own tongues, and received the happy gift of languages, I could understand it, and this, it seems, is what they intend to have inferred. But they do not directly say so. Nevertheless, this all-tongued spirit does not seem to have made any better progress, in making converts or proselytes, than the son of the great spirit himself. For the stupid ancients, both Jews and Gentiles, would not listen to the story; or, if they did, only laughed at it, as the most romantic tale they had heard, and looked on the belief of it, as the most absurd superstition which devout ignorance, or cunning and impudence could invent, effrontery preach up as a doctrine, or simple credulity accept as a creed. The infatuated, however, kept on preaching the Holy Ghost, the comforter, and hawked their fulsome nonsense about, until they actually became a nuisance through a great part of Asia Minor, and some parts of Eastern Europe. From most places, they were expelled, and, in some places, where they resolutely uttered their new-fangled nonsense, in defiance of sense and reason, and persisted in disturbing quiet people, they were imprisoned and whipped, and in some instances put to death. These the infatuated called martyrs, and, with the blood of these, they cemented the loose rubbish, of their most unaccountable church. These last brought into play the Great Evil Spirit; a being, that we find very little said about, from the fall, until the supposed commencement of the Christian era. Perhaps, it may be the same which they term Belial, in the Chronicles of their kings. And in the dramatic poem of Job, he is introduced as the court buffoon of heaven, and makes, on the whole, but a sorry appearance, though a match for his brother spirit. Through the management of the infatuated Christians, he soon became a personage of vast consequence, as prince of the air (Æolus), king of hell (Pluto), king of the earth (Titan), and Satan, or Lucifer, prince of the stars; he soon rivalled the great good spirit, his son Jesus Christ, and the curious comforter, the Holy Ghost.

Among the first itinerant preachers of Christianity, was a man named Paul. He seems to have been a bold, active fellow, and was in possession of some learning, which was a rare qualification, with the followers of Christ. Hence, he became more con-

spicuous than any of the rest, and was made foreign missionary to the society, and especially to the Greeks, whose language he understood. He seems to have learned some kind of a trade in his youth. But he first comes under our notice as runner to the Jewish holy inquisition, the tool of the high-priest, the rabbies, and Sanhedrim. The singularity of his conversion to Christianity, when on his way to persecute the Christians, gave him great credit with the new light men; and his ardour and zeal in their cause opened their confidence, while his learning and intrepidity procured him consequence and authority. Hence, in the latter part of his life, he was a fanatic field-preacher of nonsense and fable, bold to impudence, arrogant, proud, and conceited. His arguments both in favour of himself and his doctrine evince cunning and ignorance; and he is never more himself than when he leaves off both discussion and preaching, and becomes dictator. But whatever he did, he was always under the impulse of passion. I have said so much about this apostle: because he seems to have been one of the best of them, and on whom all the Christian doctors, field-preachers, and heretics rely. I must further observe of him, that he must have been, by his own confession, a great hypocrite, and that he very frequently gave bad advice. He was converted by a thunder-clap and a stroke of lightning.

Thus they continued gaining and losing, losing and gaining, for three hundred years; when a most consummate hypocrite and tyrant adopted the infatuation, added a most stupendous and lying miracle to the catalogue of Christian wonders, owned himself a convert to the new faith; became a Christian emperor on political principles, for the worst of political purposes. To enslave mankind, he made it the religion of the state, and died either a pagan or an atheist. He, too, presumed, that he saw in the atmosphere, a flash of lightning like a cross, the ensign of the Christians, though not new with them. He raised the church, however, and confirmed its power by establishing it on the foundation of monarchy, and at the expence of the liberties of the people.

For the last fifteen hundred years Christianity has been the reigning superstition of Europe, and would have been of Asia too, but for a more able man, who taught a better doctrine, and extirpated, with fire and sword, the followers of Christ, and, where he ruled, their absurd incomprehensible superstition.

Let us pause. I shall make some remarks on the foregoing, and, in another letter, continue the progress of Christianity down to the period of England's Reformation, when, from massacre and ruin, the protestants raised their structure and laid down the foundation stone of general Atheism and of the universal freedom of man.

The narrative is ended for the present; but let us ask, in the name of common sense and abused human reason, is not this story

below criticism? No! For here nearly the whole of the people believe the tale to be true, or the major part of them say they believe in the absurd fable. Here, in this rich and civilized country, upwards of one hundred and twenty thousand priests are taught to uphold the glaring lie, and are paid or exact unknown millions sterling per annum to maintain it a truth, to preach its veracity. And here to call in question its truth or authenticity is a crime punishable by the law, they say, and incurs loss of liberty or locomotion and property, subjects one to fine beyond one's means of paying, which is in direct opposition to the very letter and spirit of their boasted Magna Charta and Bill of Rights,* to unlimited imprisonment, hold you up to reproach, scorn and detestation, heaps on the most moral and well meaning man, all the calamities which human nature can bear, and deprives him, by the infernal magic of superstition, of the love, pity or commiseration of his fellow creatures. And these accumulated evils are inflicted by men hardened in legal iniquity, the foes of the human race, the prostituted pandars of open vice and unblushing licentiousness, prowling hypocrites, who preach what they do not believe, and live in the continual practice of the most degrading crimes and vices which stain humanity. They and their pernicious doctrine afford not the smallest cause for eulogy, praise or approbation; but, on the contrary, furnish at every motion and movement, subject for reproof and execration.

The pride, avarice and cruelty of the priests are proverbial. I shall here conclude with a proof, and relate a naval anecdote of Lord Nelson and a naval chaplain, worthy of being recorded for more reasons than one, as it throws a light on two characters at once. In the year — when Lord Nelson, then only a captain, commanded the King's ship — his brother, the Rev. — Nelson, was chaplain of the said ship. It happened, that two men, marines I believe, deserted, were again taken as deserters and sent on board their ship. Captain Nelson, after a summary trial punished one severely and forgave the other. He then went into his boat to go on shore with his brother, the chaplain. The Reverend chaplain, in private confidence to captain Nelson, told him he had done very wrong that morning. How? said Nelson. — You ought, sir, to have hanged one of those rascals and to have given the other five hundred lashes through the fleet. Coxswain, put about the boat and row on board, said the captain. On coming along side the ship. Go on board Parson Nelson, and pack up your things; I only give you until to morrow morning to remain on board; And, remember, you never sail with me again. Now pull away on shore.

* Bill of Rights, art. 10. "That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." But of late the laws have been dispensed with altogether. A Judge's humour and a packed jury is now true English law.

I had the story from a man who was in the boat at the time, and it is so consistent and characteristic on both sides, that it has every claim to belief.

SHEBAGO.

THE UTILITY AND BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIANITY,
And the probability of a Nation or Community of Atheists considered.

WHATEVER is probable may be; and therefore becomes a subject worthy of speculation. A nation or community of Atheists has been suggested, and the harmony which would exist in such a society has been anticipated, and dwelt on with the sensations of pleasure and delight: not by the ignorant, the foolish, and the vain; but by the learned, the wise and the discreet. The justly celebrated lord Bacon, has said so much to the purpose in favour of such an institution, that the curiosity of man is excited, and his wishes engaged to experiment on its virtue, if for no other reason than to see how it would succeed: or, as it has been lately elegantly expressed in the house of commons "to see how the thing would work." I have entertained some serious reflections on the subject; but the Christians have almost put me out of countenance with my own thoughts; and we all know by experience, that they always think justly, argue rightly, and decide honestly, whether of honour, justice, truth, civil liberty, or only speculative points of revealed or hearsay religion. Against an atheistical code, their arguments are home to the point, strong, and, as usual with them, finally decisive.

They say, Atheism would produce a world full of cut-throats; that it would beget a nation of monsters; that it would engender murders, rapes, robberies, fornication, adultery, lying, slandering, false-swearers, espionage and deceitful politics; that it would cause bloodsheds, carnage, devastation, anarchy and general ruin and confusion, Lord preserve us! and that not having the fear of God and his most holy and sacred commandments before our eyes, we should be guilty of every enormity and vice under the sun.

I have thought of this daily and nightly for a long time, and the world, if it pleases, may benefit by my daily and nocturnal lucubrations. I must, and so must all mankind, agree with the Christians, *when they are right*. And in this case we must admit their argument and reasoning to be just, as it is borne out by the surrounding evidence of experience. I call upon you Atheists, Materialists, or unbelievers in the divine mission of Jesus Christ and his father God, or Godfather, and even you, ye holy saints, Christians, to stand forward, examine, and confess the proof which is displayed by time, made manifest by experience and example.

Fifteen hundred years: for I speak not of its infancy, has Christianity, that super-divine religion, astonished the world with its virtues; and, as it was sent by the Almighty God, or rather

brought by himself in person, it wanted no support from human aid. But men, to show their gratitude to the most high, for such an inestimable blessing, have expended millions of money and shed rivers of blood for its promulgation, and maintenance. Has it not put down all other creeds by its intrinsic and exclusive merit and incontrovertible proofs? Is it not catholic or universal? Could it be otherwise, when God ordained it for the benefit of the human race? And, moreover, sent his own son, who was himself to die for it, among a band of barbarous unbelieving Jews, in a paltry town of Judea?

We very properly value every thing in proportion to the benefits conferred on our condition, as to our increase of happiness. On these simple terms, we shall examine the Christian system of religion and ethics, and fairly appreciate, from these, the worth and importance of its doctrine. Wherever this divine religion is predominant, which, notwithstanding its catholicism, is nowhere universal, and only general in Europe, and here rapidly decaying, there is observable a beauty of conformity, astonishing to the rest of the world! Here there are no schisms, no wild ramifications from the divine tree of Christian knowledge, no deviations from the word and spirit of immutable perfection; and the last sacred mission sent as the ultimate testament of Omnipotence: all here is peace, harmony, and the most delightful concord, nothing prevails but good will towards men, and the most seraphic happiness among Christians, as must naturally be the case when the Almighty set his hand to the seal, and benignantly consecrated his labour to perfect human felicity, and ensure eternal salvation! You never find any of the vices current in other societies among the disciples of Christ, by whatever of their thousand names they are mentioned! Here is no such thing as false-swearers, or indeed swearing at all; because, their great teacher has expressly forbidden it! Christians can take each others word and use no binding, obligatory oaths, like the heathens and pagans of old! *They know each other*, consequently, their mutual confidence is unlimited! among them, there is no backbiting, envy, hatred, jealousy, malice, or detraction! No villainous scandal to the detriment of a neighbour and the gratification of the most sordid dispositions; no falsehood, no suborning of witness and perverting of law and justice, no swearing against truth to aid vice and crime, to overcome virtue, honesty, and innocence. No private spite, malice, or injurious slanders to destroy individual reputation, or to sully an upright character. No degrading littleness of mind, no shifting, cringing, fawning, flattering knaves in office, in order to make them unjust and confer unmerited favours on the despicable slaves beneath them. No lying, cheating, stealing; no villains living in defiance of all laws, divine and human, and, when dying at the gallows, praying and piously hoping forgiveness of God through the merits of another man,

whom they call Jesus Christ, and who, they say, was also hung on a cross for sedition and blasphemy. No dirty meannesses in trade, no underhand dealings, no overreaching or monopolizing property for the benefit of one to the detriment of thousands. No substituting hypocrisy for honesty and counting all fair gain that does not lead direct to the gallows. No, all is fair, candid, and sincere, as God and his son Jesus Christ, who is as old as himself, would have it; who ordained all things, before they came to pass, from the beginning. Here, among devout Christians, there is no pride, ambition, or insatiable passion for money, power, or other gain. No exterminating, unjust and cruel wars, to rethrone expelled tyrannic monarchs: no horrid sieges and slaughtering battles, destroying thousands in a day. No singing Te Deums on both sides, for the slaying of myriads in the name of the Lord, the King, and Country! No ruinous and insupportable taxes to maintain an hundred families and beggar and enslave an hundred thousand. No legal modes of enslaving mankind, and telling them that they enjoy perfect freedom, and are the glory of the world and the envy of surrounding nations. No desperate systems of polities, designed by the worst of men to ruin and degrade the best, to uphold evil and to destroy good. No state ministers cut off in the career of their designs against the people, nor any cutting their own throats from the horror of enormities committed. No kings, but what are prudent, wise and good. No princes, who are not just, temperate and benevolent.

I am fond of dwelling on the beauty of this Christian picture, were all the virtues meet to render the portrait interesting and amiable and so like the lovely original. All the priests of this heavenly worship are holy, pious, learned, intelligent, humble, moral and chaste. Not touched nor rendered detestable by pride, avarice, cruelty, meanness and horrid crimes. None of them have been obliged to fly the country for the perpetration of offences repugnant to human nature and too abominable even to be named. Here are no thieves, no murderers, no fornicators, no adulterers, no duelling, no trials for crim. con. or breach of faith. No house-breakers, incendiaries, spies, informers or pick-pockets. No canting, babbling hypocrites, preaching what they know nothing about to idle ignorant vain fools. No gamblers, drunkards, highwaymen, no flatterers of the rich nor grinders of the poor. This must be the blessed effect of Christianity: no other thing could produce such an absence of crime and holiness of life. Is there any thing to look at in the Christian world that is contaminated with evil? Then is the Christian religion and ethics not perfect? Now were it true, that the reverse of this was the case, or that the Christians were daily and hourly in the commission of all

these crimes and many more; if the character of the Christian combined all these vices and we require no witnesses to prove the fact, I would ask if Atheism, Deism, Dogism, or any other ism could stain society with blacker crimes or add one to the catalogue? Indeed, the worst of it is, that the Atheists will have very great trouble and experience much difficulty in cleaning the Augean stable of Christianity. However, for the sake of suffering humanity, try it they must. But after all, we must praise and admire the generous tolerance of the Christian church or priesthood; for they give us leave to think, and we at least surmise, that, whether they say church, religion or God, it is priest they mean: And these priests will absolutely, I am astonished at the indulgence, give you leave to think; but can by no means extend the indulgence any farther.

Let us pause here and take a retrospective view of this mighty establishment. Let us trace the Christian creed and sturdy dogmas to their root, or as near the stump of the tree as we can. It is worth the time and trouble to run over a fair outline of church history, for the last fifteen or sixteen hundred years, provided, we make a proper use of the labour and experience. We must carefully note the difference between the extremes of this imposing compound *religion*; from its dubious beginning in the second century, to its gouty, bloated, crippled and corrupt existence, in the year of grace, 1825. Mark the first half mad, forlorn, ragged vagabonds, running about preaching to the ignorant poor, the inconsistent glad tidings of a happy equality; decrying established laws, human reason and all known modes of worship; promulgating the novelty of an edifying, incomprehensible grace. Kicked out of one place for fools and impostors; permitted in another; considered by the wise as madmen; pitied by the good-natured; relieved by the charitable; imprisoned by the laws; scourged by the magistrates; and, beheld by the honest and sober-minded, with suspicion or contempt. A devout, a lenient, or a fiery persecution, alike confirmed, or rather formed, their creed or belief; for, it is not easy to discover the original tenets of Mother Church. Their unformed religion was made and established by public notice, and by rash and untimely persecutions by fools, fanatics and tyrants of another order, which exalted them into consequence. From whence or at what particular period of time, they first sprung up, is very doubtful. The desultory doctrine, which they preached, was a crude compound of ancient mythology and mystic

morality, jumbled together by cunning, fraud and ignorance. As such, it was calculated for the meridian of unskilfull credulity, and the illiterate mob, who swallowed as a whole and never chewed the mass. Its puerile absurdity and untangible nature rendered it insignificant and contemptible in the eyes of wisdom and learning. Hence it throve without merit and augmented with or without opposition. For while the herd of mankind were collecting dogmas, putting old traditions and new conceptions into a train, new forming a heaven for themselves and their friends and fabricating a hell for their enemies; while they were getting the lessons of designing hedge-preachers by heart, and laying the foundation of an amusing doctrine of spiritual worlds, the fullness of grace and insinuating, a pleasing, though absurd tale of human redemption; sages and philosophers looked on in silence, with the stupid, stall-fed indifference of a protestant prelate, until the cheat became too general to brook contradiction, too proud and strong to submit to investigation, and the current of belief too powerful to be subdued by reason or argument. It is only the wise and the good who will bear to argue the point; ignorance will never condescend to be instructed, nor stoop to the humility of owning its errors. Hence stupid dogmas, founded by fraud and cunning, grafted on ignorance, shielded by folly and nourished by superstition, are invincible, merely from their inaccessible position in the human mind. The designing preachers clothed themselves with a sanctified, imposing, external garb of humility and personal debasement; they put on a devout appearance, and, keeping a steady eye on this world, talked of nothing but the kingdom of heaven, spiritual beings and the world to come. Having made themselves masters of heaven, they, under the endearing name of Papa, Pope, or Father, made a bold push towards obtaining full possession of the earth, and in all humility endeavoured to reign paramount over kings and people. Such was the power which they usurped over men, and such their intolerable pride and mode of exercising it, that we look back on their transactions with wonder, contemplate them with terror and indignation, and tremble to think, that such terrible and degrading dramas may be again acted even in our own times.

This was the regular progress of the divine mission, nor has any thing been bettered by it. The good was nearly extirpated, the bad made worse, new evils were introduced, and such was the base equivocation of the church doctrine,

or religious code, that the virtuous and innocent only suffered, that the wicked might act with impunity against reason, law, and even their own divinity. This was a difference, with a vengeance, to the mortified fathers of the primitive Christians. And now, behold the bloated, proud son of the church, too fat or too lazy to walk, rolling in his splendid chariot, surrounded with the choicest luxuries of the earth, wallowing in the hot-bed of voluptuousness, despising his fellow creature man, and scarcely deigning to thank his God for the good things which he receives in his name : for priests are become proverbially avaricious, cruel and ungrateful which speaks volumes for their creed and raises a high respect for their divine mission.

What a contrast between the half mad, ragged, run-about staff and wallet apostle of the first ages, the frowsy fat monk of the middle times, and the gorgeous bishop, round vicar, sleek prebend, and reverend priest of the nineteenth century! Every thing that brazen impudence could achieve, cunning invent, cruelty perform, or skilful deception carry-into practice, has been done by priestcraft, to keep the human race in bondage and fearful subjection. Every thing, which soaring ambition, daring pride, and importunate avarice could propose, has been tried to accomplish that end; and, among the rest, not the last, is the present mode of investing the priest with magisterial power. This was the case long before the church of Christ was thought of; but it was for a long time neglected in Christendom, and for an obvious reason was rendered unnecessary, because auricular confession was equal or superior to the power of the magistrate; now the sword and scales, added to the clerical gown, is fully equivalent to the confessor's chair; and a jail, penitentiary, and tread-mill, are penances equally restrictive and terrifying to any thing in ancient use. As usual, they are invested by the rich for the benefit of the poor! Now, our priests, or the priests of the present day, for the atheist or materialist has nothing to do with them, except to pay an unjust tax to support their impositions: our desiderate is truth, and he who seeks for truth will never go to a priest to find it; but the priests of the present day are nearly all magistrates: and, I will say, with the boldness of truth and with the spirit of freedom, that they are the most unjust judges that ever sat on a bench, and wholly unfitted, from the accident of birth and prejudice of education, for deciding on a poor man's cause! Their injustice proceeds from a combination of events which must form the full character of an unjust man, which is, perhaps, the worst epithet that our or any other language can apply to a human being. I shall mention some of the causes which lead to the point.

First, The priests of the established church, and such only, are magistrates—are the sons of a proud and depraved aristocracy. Navy, army and church, in this case, are similar. The power and profit of the state are in their hands. The aristocracy really ima-

gine the people made for their use and only fit to be their slaves. This sentiment they derive from their Gothic ancestors. The precept is equal to the example; and, even in infancy, their children, who are to be the future priests and rulers of the people, are taught the one and experience makes them masters of the other. In their infancy, they are made to hate and dread the poor as bugaboos, and are frightened to sleep in the name of degraded poverty. "The beggar man is coming!" In youth they are instructed to support a proud superiority over those under them, and consider it a disgrace to speak to their inferiors with common civility. They are separated, at an early age, from the people for whom they are intended to pray and then to rob. They are educated in seminaries decidedly hostile to the welfare of a people and their civil liberty. They see nothing but pride and arrogance at home, and at school have the lessons of their infancy repeated on a larger scale. Thus taught, by precept and example, to fear, hate and disdain the whole labouring part of society, steeled by prejudice against feeling or commiseration for the poor, armed by power and custom, and conscious of ready assistance, they are sent forth from the schools, not to instruct the people; not to improve their minds, or open their understandings; not to benefit the poor, or to add to their felicity, nor to augment the happiness of their pretended cures; but to tyrannize over them, and to cringe to those in power, aid injustice, and enjoy their church or tax-begotten properties.

These undeniable reasons bear me out in my assertion, and clearly demonstrate the benefit to society of a Christian priest and magistrate. This is by no means an exaggerated portrait of the Christian doctrine preacher. Then, who can deny its vast utility, and are its blessings not visible in every glebe-house in the kingdom? Are not its sainting and enslaving principles discernible at every turning, street, lane, hedge, and common, in this highly favoured country? People must be mad to oppose such a pure spiritual religion, which leads to such rich materialities. We have but little room to spare, and must be very laconic with our second-part Atheism.

In the first place, we claim no novelty in our belief; for we are fully convinced, that there was a time when Atheism was common, and the idea has been repeated from time to time. However saints may stare, with their 1800 years of preaching about miracles, and prophecies and evidences of Christianity, and proofs of a God, two-thirds of the present world are Atheists, and all are latent sceptics? for, whatever is undefinable and wholly incomprehensible, if it causes any thing, it must be a doubt; and what we doubt, we cannot say we believe. As for the bedlam ravings of the methodists and their superlatively vain, vulgar, disgusting, fanatic teachers, let them abide in their uncultivated wilderness of spiritual nonsense. Their time will be short, to abuse, lie,

rant, and to delude others still more ignorant and stupid than themselves. Yea, verily, they shall have a second call, and the second shall be greater than the first.—Their brimstone is nearly exhausted, and their friend the Devil has not an ounce to spare. Carlyle has blown up his whole magazine. The power of truth will open a north-west passage into their tabernacles and destroy their Urim and Thummim. The ephod shall be dragged from off their priest, and their invisible brazen idol fall down before the God Reason. But as interest not religion is their prime mover, whatever promotes this will become their prevailing principle. The methodists, being composed of the lower order of people in general, so their manners are stiff, distant and forbidding, and their religious notions are the most absurd of all the religious sects. Here bigotry, superstition and bomb-proof ignorance shine in native brass. In religious matters they divest themselves of reason, and, in temporal concerns, they divest themselves of religion. Gospel ignorance shields them alike from the arrows of wit and the stings of mental reflection. Let them rest in their devout imbecility. They, who decry human sense and reason, are unworthy of argument. The wise laugh at fools, but can never be angry with them. That Atheists should supersede all sects does not appear to me in the least wonderful. The only wonder is, that such a pernicious doctrine as Christianity should have survived so long. That a nation of Atheists or a community forming part of a nation, may be, is highly probable, and very possible at no distant period. When such a thing, for the benefit of man, does take place, the difference between it and saint and slave making Christianity was infinite. Christianity was evidently founded on fable, fraud and ignorance. Atheism will be founded on justice, science and truth. At least, as far as human knowledge can command the prospect or explore the avenues of identity. No mysterious providence to mislead, no God to forgive crimes, no devil to punish moral innocence, no priest will dare to teach what he does not understand. And tell us that we shall be damned to all eternity, if we dispute his authority or ask for his voucher. No dogmas to clog our senses and forbid the growth of mind, no imagination of immortal identity to torment our present existence. To man alone must the atheist be amenable, and his conduct alone must lead him to honour, peace, and happiness, or render him at once despicable and miserable. There will be no subterfuge for vice to shelter under, in the wide dark cloke of hypocrisy. No washing dirty coal-black sinners whiter than snow in the blood of the lamb! No paying of tithes to a proud, licentious, and litigious priest for reading nonsense out of an old book, telling us how the wicked horde of unclean Jews* killed and destroyed innocent people

* Vide Justin's Ancient History (Historium Judæorum.) He says that Abraham not Moses was the leader of the Israelites out of Egypt. They were six thousand in number and all of them lepers, turned out of the land for uncleanness. This agrees with the laws which we find in Leviticus, and accounts for part of the code. S.

three or four thousand years ago, and collected more riches, by plunder and rapine, into the sandy desert of Palestine, than the world ever possessed. Virtues must thrive in the absence of all these vices, and men may be happy. To make them so must be the arduous task of materialism.

Now to father, son, husband, wife, daughter, &c. I recommend the study of their own happiness, by promoting that of their neighbours; for public and private happiness are founded on the social virtues: these never can thrive where the influence of superstition prevails. Abolish religion and cant, seek truth and be happy.

SHEBAGO.

AN IMPROMPTU

On hearing of the Liberation of Richard Carlile.

RETURN, honest friend, in peace to thy home,
In pleasures serene enjoy prolonged life;
Come, come, like a Victor, though not to a Throne
Have pleasures more Great in a virtuous wife
A Partner, so good, so true to thy cause,
Regardless of danger deserves our Applause,
Determined to foster fair Freedom's best laws.

Come, come, thou shalt find thy days but began,
Arrived at the Temple* thou'l shew thour't the man,
Regardless of Dungeons, of Bolts, or of Bars,
Legal quibbling, indictments or torturing jars.
In spite of all these, thou shalt find thyself blest,
Lo! thy enemies fallen in chop and in crest,
England echoes thy name from the east to the west!

J. B. Little Coram Street Russel Square.

* The Temple of Reason, Fleet Street.

TO MR. RICHARD CARLILE.

DEAR SIR,

Sheffield, Nov. 23, 1825.

MOST heartily do I congratulate you on your release from inquisitorial durance, and on your victory over the slaves of superstition. I received on Monday night the welcome news. As you are liberated, I thought it prudent to close the subscriptions and herewith send you the names and sums. The subscription for the men in Newgate I will keep open a little longer. I shall be anxious to hear when you mean to pay us a visit. Hoping, that the reign of terror is at an end,

I remain your fellow labourer,

W. V. HOLMES.

A Friend who wishes Carlile and his prin- ciples to prosper for the benefit of man- kind	20 0	John Seddon, Derby	1 0
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Cash paid, and not re- turned at Paine's Din- ner	3 0	Mark Newton	1 0
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John Slater	1 0	Q in the corner	0 6
		Moses Evers	0 3
		W. Fowler	0 3
		John Milner	0 6
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		T. Rose	0 6
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